

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Disclosed are methods and compositions for identifying agents which modulate the interaction of Robo and a Robo ligand and for modulating the interaction of Robo and a Robo ligand. The methods for identifying Robo:ligand modulators find particular application in commercial drug screens. These methods generally comprise (1) combining a Robo polypeptide, a Slit polypeptide and a candidate agent under conditions whereby, but for the presence of the agent, the Robo and Slit polypeptides engage in a first interaction, and (2) determining a second interaction of the Robo and Slit polypeptides in the presence of the agent, wherein a difference between the first and second interactions indicates that the agent modulates the interaction of the Robo and Slit polypeptides. The subject methods of modulating the interaction of Robo and a Robo ligand involve combining a Robo polypeptide, a Slit polypeptide and a modulator under conditions whereby, but for the presence of the modulator, the Robo and Slit polypeptides engage in a first interaction, whereby the Robo and Slit polypeptides engage in a second interaction different from the first interaction. In a particular embodiment, the modulator is dominant negative form of the Robo or Slit polypeptide.